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# SPONGEBOB

THE MAGAZINE THAT LEAVES M  
SUMMER 2010



WHAT WE THINK OF  
**DANZIG**  
FRED OLEN RAY ZOMBIES ARE FOR DOUCHEBAGS  
THE WOMEN OF STUCK

COVER PAINTING JOEL ROBINSON

SUMMER 2010 FREE / WORLD



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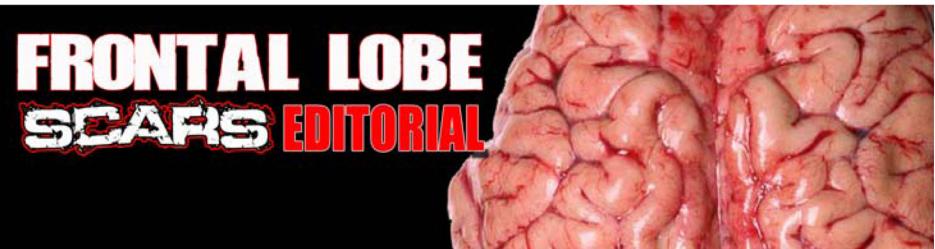
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Cover: Glenn Danzig  
Himself  
Cover Art: Joel Robinson



Welcome to our Danzig cover issue. The contents of which are strangely devoid of Glenn Danzig. Here's the story.

Back in April of this year, we were contacted by a real nice freelancer, who was working with some of Danzig's reps on creating an article for Danzig's new album "Deth Red Sabaoth." He'd worked with Glenn before. He could meet a deadline. His samples excited us. And we happened to know a kick ass artist, Joel Robinson, who could create a cover we'd love. As an almost embarrassingly big Danzig fan, my enthusiasm blinded me from some obvious warning signs. Like sudden delayed, evasive responses of the reps. Still, we persisted forward, clinging on to hope that our writer would come through for us, pushing back the issue from its May/June date until what you see now. It wasn't until Rue Morgue displayed a preview of their EXCLUSIVE Danzig cover online that the real dismay kicked in. And of course, two days later, the PR peeps came back in touch to tell our writer the project was nixed.

Ultimately, we decided to keep our cover. Instead of our planned interview/article, we've included a written examination of what about Danzig has made him such an enduring presence in not only metal, but pop culture. And we've got some other goodies for you too.

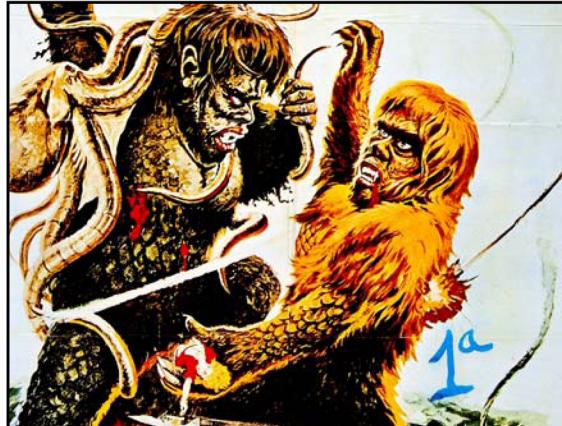
Jonathan Plombon looks into the realm of horror and wrestling with a hugely indepth article on one of its most fascinating hybrid showman: Fred Olen Ray. Told straight from the mouth of Ray himself, along with stories from Peter Maivia, Jr., Ric Drasin and more, Fred Olen Ray's story is the ultimate example of when grindhouse meets the ring.

And then there's the article that Ray, the Wizard of SCARS, is afraid to run. "Zombies are for Douchebags." We'll let you read that one for yourself.

So setbacks and delayed release dates aside, remember, we won't stop –

UNTIL EVERYONE HAS SCARS.  
Fallon Masterson, Reigning High Priestess

## COMING NEXT ISSUE!



**GIANT MONSTERS ATTACK!**

# DANZIG, DANZIG WHERE FOR ART THOU?

by Fallon Masterson

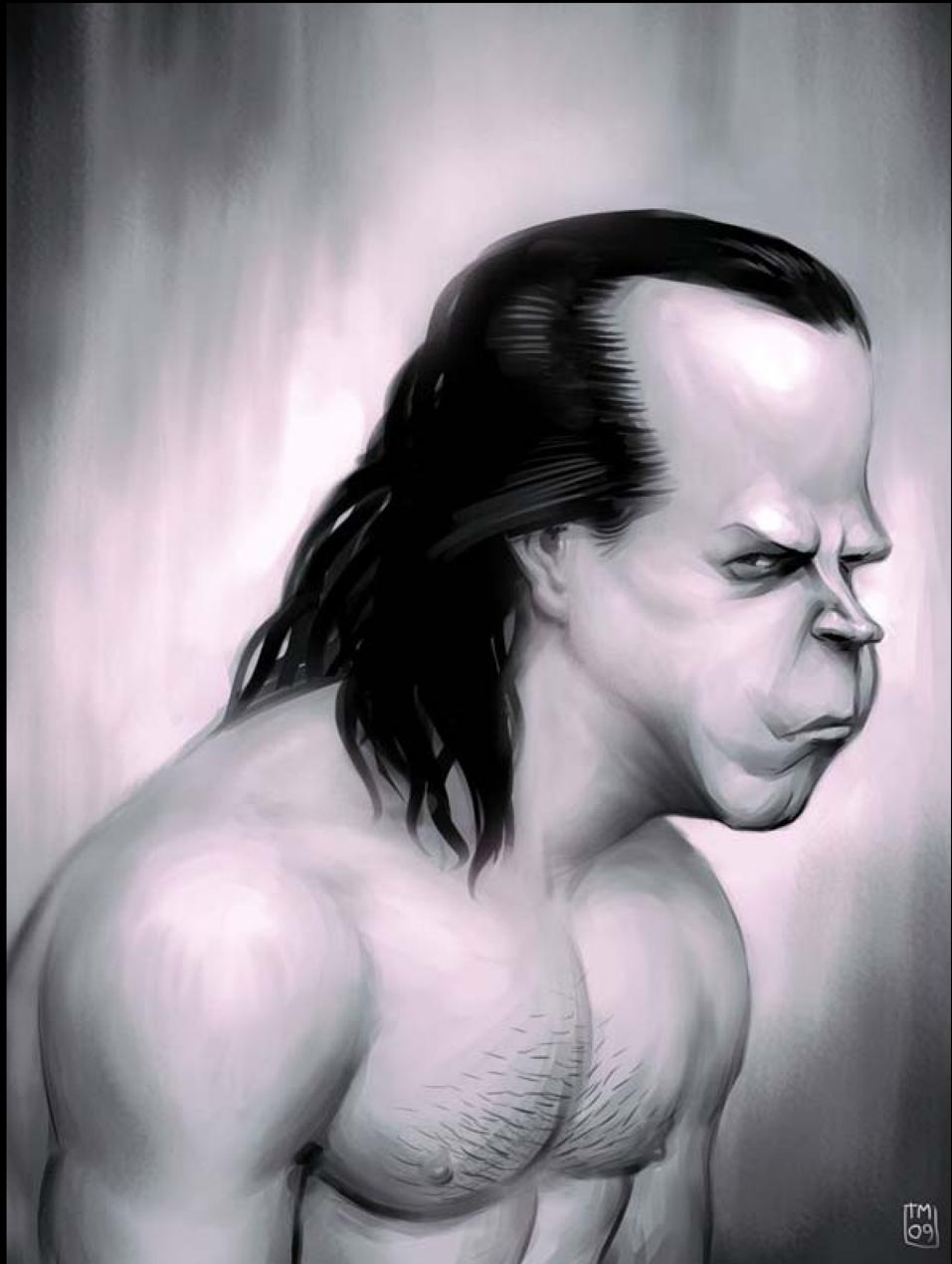


When we first began envisioning how we wanted to celebrate Danzig this summer, the initial crux of our content circled his new album, *Deth Red Sabaoth*. We thought, “Well, this should be straight forward. We run the interview, throw in the press photos, talk about his comic line, review the album, and call it a day.” But what’s exciting about publishing is sometimes content you were proof positive on alludes you; you lose interviews or contacts, or you have the wisdom to realize some reviews just aren’t going to be terribly interesting, no matter how they’re spun. Then you get to look at the bigger picture – and the more interesting question.

As addressed in this month’s opening editorial, *Rue Morgue* also featured Glenn Danzig on their cover this summer. When they previewed the issue cover online, something surprising happened. Their fans became polarized – several identifying themselves as longtime readers who would not be interested in an issue with Danzig on the cover.

The question is: Why? What is it about Danzig and his career that creates such a diverse reaction?

First off, let’s be honest. Most Mega Danzig Fans are kind of hard-ons. I count myself as a Danzig apologist. I’ve got on sizable rose colored glasses when it comes to him and his body of work, usually without being delusional. I once met a Danzig fan who, after seeing the “Danzig Gets Knocked Out” YouTube sensation, thought that Danzig hadn’t actually been punched



Caricature by Teemu Matinlauri, 2009, [www.tempesthole.com](http://www.tempesthole.com)

out – but rather that he'd strategically dropped to the ground to take out North Side King's Danny Marianinho's legs. So for a lot of guys, Danzig is pretty serious business. Yet for many, he remains a big joke, whose merits and musical ability are almost always scoffed at by the dubious and faithless – who upon hearing you're a Danzig fan respond with, "Oh. Didn't he get his ass kicked?" Or maybe, "Mother is good. But that's it."

Who are these people, these Danzig deniers who can't see the strange, unearthly reach he's had? My mother may not know the name Danzig, but she knows the Crimson Skull. Danzig era Misfits tracks are some of the most celebrated punk songs of all time – standing out in a genre and time frame of competitors who wanted nothing more than to stand out, Danzig Misfits songs actually did. And stood the test of time. How many times has that skull been tattooed over someone's body?

Pop culture has been strange to Danzig. Alternately knocking his serious demeanor, and exploiting his moodiness to create perfect genre moments. Let's take a brief look at some moments Danzig has reared his head into unexpected sectors of pop.

## The Hangover

In 2009, The Hangover became the highest grossing R-rated comedy of all time. Its posters adorn frathouses, its quotes spiral out of the mouths of morons. Yet this, the most mainstream of mainstream comedies, chose a Danzig song for its opening credits. And not the heralded and accepted Mother. Instead, audiences across America were introduced to the complex and gothically awesome sounds of Thirteen. A release off *Danzig 6* previously unknown to anyone but aforementioned Mega Fans. Score not only for Team Danzig, but for the rest of the country for getting to hear that song.

## Aqua Teen Hunger Force

Comedy Central programming and Danzig don't normally go hand in hand. In 2002, however, Aqua Teen Hunger Force aired an episode, "Cybernetic Ghost of Christmas Past from the Future" which guest-starred Danzig, himself, as a willing participant in parody. The strangely popular episode featured Glenn as himself, a

morose next door neighbor with a swimming pool full of blood. He voiced the episode and everything. Everyone who accuses Danzig of taking himself too seriously, take that suckas.

## Multiple YouTube Phenomena

Aside from the earlier noted video of shame moment, Danzig spoof videos are an oddly occurring diversion that several entrepreneurship souls have dedicated time to making. Haven't seen the Danzig/Shakira "Hips Don't Lie" mash-up? Or maybe the Danzig impersonator crooning Danzig's hypothetical shopping list? You may be the only one. These viral sensations show that, fringe as Danzig may appear, his mockery will always equal pop hilarity.

A couple of other gems you might remember, whether or not you're a Danzig fan, was the push for Danzig to play Wolverine, when initial casting announcements were made for the first X-Men movie, or maybe the parody character of Danzig in the Brain Candy movie (a bit more apropos, since Kids in the Hall: Brain Candy came out in '96. Although a lot of people turned their back on Glenn that year when he went all industrial/jungle with Blackacidevil, for the most part, he was still on a solid track. His preceding four albums were all solid, serious, consistent releases. But by '96, he was definitely losing some momentum from those who might have grown bored by his bluesy, devil-in-carnate act.)

What's notable about all of the above is that they all target Danzig, in particular,

not The Misfits. Popular as The Misfits may be, it's Danzig who gets attention in the form of the likes of *Guitar Hero* (and, another recent example, an interview on FOX News Channel). Yet, there are those who dismiss Danzig's metal releases, under the eponymously named band. For the unfamiliar, Danzig albums are generally referred to by numbers (a trend that more or less stopped with *Circle of Snakes* – what would have been Danzig 8, and has not been mentioned at all with *Deth Red Sabaoth*. Recording *Circle of Snakes*, and by proxy we can assume *Deth Red Sabaoth*, he explained in an interview with Rock Brigade Magazine as "not part of that whole cycle. For me this was a much freer experience to do this record, but that's something I did to myself. I wanted to follow a self imposed cycle for those previous records.") *Danzig I-IV* are referred to as his classic era, and are generally not goofed on by his fans.

Unfortunately others will never make it beyond even *Danzig II*.

The answer seems to lie in our increasing fascination with irony – a word completely ill fit to describe any aspect of Danzig's music or stage persona. Musically, Danzig has held steady to the hand of darkness, and for those who like to take the piss out of everything, it's an easy target. Yet the consistency of his style and talent are unique. He's referenced again and again quite simply because there is no other Danzig.





by Gray Bouchard  
illustrations by Jason Mayoh

You heard me.  
You like zombies?  
You're a douchebag.  
That simple.

Well, maybe not that simple. We are in the midst of a full-on pop culture assault, one far more irritating to me than all the sparkly vampires and American remakes of J-horror combined. Yes, at this point, I'd far and away rather watch "Twilight: Eclipse" and "The Eye 2" than a zombie flick. The truth is (and believe me, I never thought when I was 15 years old and watching all 3-and-a-half boring-as-shit hours of "Dawn of the Dead" in rapt attention that I'd be saying this) that zombies are some weak-ass bullshit.

I imagine this seems controversial: Zombies have been for years a staple of the horror genre, perennially lurching into theaters and people's homes through countless films, comics, books, and other pop culture paraphernalia. As horror fans, we are programmed to have a certain fondness for the living dead; from the endless parade of times/occasions/locations/accoutrements/festivities -of- the - Dead given to us by the illustrious George Romero, to the dancing ghouls in "Thriller," zombies seem to be the (exposed) backbone of the genre, a time-honored trope that we as honor fans could not imagine living (or otherwise) without.

All of which is particularly unfortunate given the aforementioned fact of zombies being some weak-ass bullshit, whose loudest champions tend to be irritating dickholes.

I say this also knowing that zombies are probably not considered the most high-profile target for overexposure. While the amount of zombies in popular film and television seems to be holding a relatively steady keel, one could easily argue that vampires (from the waifish, sparkly "Twilight" kind to the brooding, inexplicably accented "True Blood" kind) are well on their way to being (or already are) a douchebags ghoul of choice.

Ultimately, the difference in the two levels of fuckwit enthusiasm is subtle, but important to stress; it is the reason why seeing a 14 year old girl giggling and swooning at Hot Topic and taking about she'd like Robert Pattenson to nibble on her is irritating, but forgivable, and why seeing some bro-dude hi-fiving his friends in a Spencer's Gifts while buying a "CERTIFIED ZOMBIE KILLER" t-shirt fills me with a profound, shuddering disgust.

**"Zombies have been for years a staple of the horror genre, perennially lurching into theaters and people's homes through countless films, comics, books, and other pop culture paraphernalia"**

Now, I can personally say I know quite a few self-professed horror fans who cling to the idea of zombies as some cool shit, many of whom have tastes I respect or at least don't treat with utter disdain. Even your humble author doesn't intrinsically have a distaste for the shambling little buggers.

For the average (read: not completely unbearable) horror fan, zombies are a bit like a security blanket: they're predictable and familiar with their lumbering gaits and watery groans, easy purveyors of the gore and scares we crave. They have no real motivations beyond their ravenous consumption of human flesh and this can be, in its own way, quite satisfying. Perhaps we admire the zombie as a simpler crea-



ture, at peace with his place in the world, content with his station of feasting upon the living, preferably starting with the fat friend who decided to call out to his buddies that “the coast is clear,” or with the cheerleader who decided to go skinny-dipping. Also, this one time, a zombie totally beat up a shark.

However, the vast majority of those I polled in preparation for writing this article (my preparation also includes consuming disturbing quantities of Cherry Dr. Pepper and Reese’s Peanut Butter Easter Bunnies, while listening to the Misfits in my underwear) have expressed a feeling of “zombie-fatigue,” a sense of malaise and general boredom with how zombies appear to be everywhere at the moment. Movies, TV, video games, books, comic books; all media seems suddenly saturated with rotting revenants. We are surrounded by them: slow-moving but inescapable,

you Max Brooks. Thank you for deciding to, like every stoned teenager has done with his friends since the fucking 70s, to watch a George Romero marathon and discuss exactly what all the characters are doing wrong. Thank you for compiling these half-baked contemplations into this humorless tome, lavishly illustrated for the illiterate. Thank you for creating the perfect branding, ensuring it ends up being gifted by clueless parents to their kid who they think has “out there” taste. Thank you for making sure this can be found on every dormroom shelf in between the Family Guy DVDs and a can of Axe Body Spray. Now please replace all the previous occurrences of the word “thank” with the word “fuck.”

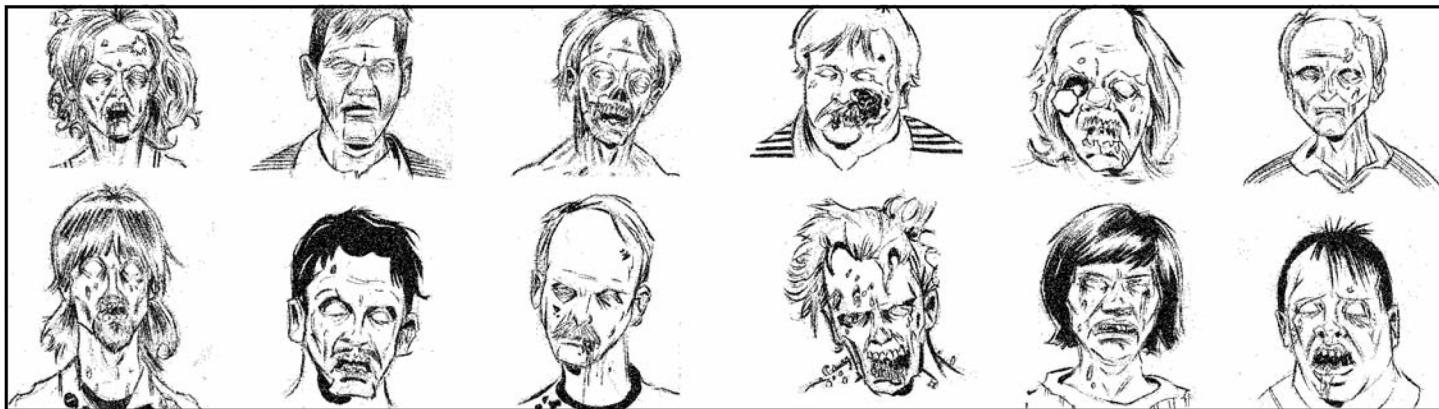
### 3. Student films featuring zombies.

Look, kid, we KNOW you don’t have a budget and you’re uncle has a creepy cabin in the woods outside Gloucester. We

too of Rainbow Bright on her calf. The zombie appeals to the hipster because it’s the easiest semi-horror related phenomenon they can think of that doesn’t have the subcultural baggage that a vampire might (too goth). The zombie also allows them many ironic costume combinations: a hipster will rarely just go to a party dressed as a zombie; he may go as a zombie-rabbi or as a zombie serial killer (dressed as a normal zombie because, “serial killers look just like us. Especially zombie ones...”) or as a homophobic zombie (“Rrrrrr, braaaaaaiiiinss... rrrrrr, god hates faaaaaaaaggssss...”) or as a zombie member or Team Zessou.

### Zombies are for jocks.

Zombies are for the dude who is STILL quoting the movie “Anchorman.” Zombies are for the guy who thinks it’s acceptable to wear anything from TAPOUT. The



harmless (or at least inoffensive) except when we find ourselves surrounded.

How has this occurred? Excellent question, a perfect segue into...

### Gray's Top Three Most Irritating Zombie Manifestations

**1. Zombie walks/zombie appreciation days/zombie parties.** Jesus fucking Christ, is there no sorrier spectacle? A bunch of drunk-ass hipsters deciding it’s time to get their spook on and lurch from bar to bar, even though the other 354 (the average hipster probably attends 11 zombie related events a year) days of the year they couldn’t give two shits about horror? Thinking that zombies are just quirky enough and just devoid enough of real cultural connotations to indulge in?

**2. “The Zombie Survival Guide.”** Thank

know you have a group of idiot friends. We know you only have 4 days to shoot, edit, and hand in a complete short to your professor. We know he’s kinda a hard-ass because he used to direct episodes of “21 Jumpstreet.” Please. Just stop. Do a film about a cute indie couple breaking up in a bathroom set to a Frightened Rabbit song.

These particular manifestations embody the spirit of the three most annoying groups who have suddenly decided to champion the zombie: Hipsters, Jocks, and Emotionally Stunted Nerds.

### Zombies are for hipsters.

Zombies are for the dude who screen-prints his own shirts. No, he has his arty ex-girlfriend (who he still sleeps with from time to time) screen print his own shirts. Zombies are for the guy who grows ironic facial hair or the girl who gets a tat-

zombie appeals to the jock because he likes the idea that he could be a badass tough guy and because dressing up as a zombie allows him to wear makeup but won’t challenge his sexuality (vampires are a little queer). The jock love of zombies is pretty much typified by Woody Harrelson’s turn as Tallahassee in “Zombieland,” perhaps the most jock zombie film to date. The policy of “nut up or shut up” (which basically could be translated as “git ‘er done” or “cowboy up” or “Amer-I-CAN”) when it comes to beating the literal brains out of post-human beings with utter impunity is irresistible to the dude who thinks he’s doing a kid a favor by shoving his head in a toilet.

### Zombies are for emotionally stunted nerds.

Zombies are for that dude who can’t decide if his favorite director is Warner Her-

zog or Quentin Tarentino. Ironically, emotionally stunted nerds (usually the ones GETTING their heads shoved in toilets) respond to zombies for many of the same reasons jocks do: it allows them to indulge adolescent power/revenge fantasies and feel like a badass. The difference is that they are usually more obsessive and

douchebag. I had grand dreams about writing and directing a trilogy of post-zombie apocalypse films that would feature a family drama/coming of age tale just as prominently as cannibalism. I will concede that this, after several years of sobering reflection, probably was ill-conceived. The lesson here is that your dreams are

ramifications about playing god like their lurching, undead kin Frankenstein.

There is nothing to “get” about zombies. There is no subtext, everything is on the surface. They’re the living dead. They show up completely without warning or cause. They want to eat you. They have

## Frankly, there is NOTHING clever or hip about zombies. They are a blunt instrument, a tool. They are basically bloody crash-test dummies.

immersed in the zombie culture. They will obsessively screen zombie films and argue contingency plans with their friends for when the zombie apocalypse occurs. They make distinctions between “Romero zombies” and the “Running zombies,” under the illusion that these distinctions actually matter. They are irritated by the inconsistent continuity of the “Resident Evil” movies. Their love of zombies is often in service of obsessively creating a “rule-book” for how to deal with the impending zombie plague. The character of Columbus in “Zombieland” (played by eternadork Jesse Eisenberg) basically summed up this mentality: his wit, if not exactly his brashness, would be enough to spare him being consumed by the living dead. Also, that 1:1 scale replica of the Highlander sword he got for Christmas that one year could totally cut off, like, a million zombie heads.

They also believe they can “breath new life, no pun intended” into the genre with their “unique take” on the zombie menace, which of course is “influenced by George Romero, Danny Boyle, and Lloyd Kaufman.”

In service of full-disclosure, before I gave up on my dreams and embraced my failure as an artist/human being, I should note I fell squarely into this latter category of

immaterial and flimsy and nothing you do will ever amount to anything. I feel pretty comfortable with this revelation.

The strength of the zombie is that he is positioned just right in our cultural mythos to appeal to the dumbass jock, the supposed horror aficionado, the nerd with adolescent power fantasies, and the cultural hipster. I’d like to really hammer that home to those of you who think you’re being clever or hip by wearing your badge of zombie pride.

Frankly, there is NOTHING clever or hip about zombies. They are a blunt instrument, a tool. They are basically bloody crash-test dummies, their rotted features a perfect blank canvas for jerks everywhere to project whatever silly agenda they want without having to worry about ensconced cultural meaning. There is no subtext, regardless of what many high minded media studies BFAs will insist with their senior thesis. They have been stripped of any and all subtext.

This is what makes the zombie phenomenon astoundingly utilitarian when it comes to appealing to d-bags. They are painfully simple: no challenging messages about sexuality, a la vampires. No meditations upon the inner beast, like a werewolf. They even don’t carry the philosophical

bad skin. Sever the head, destroy the brain. Yawn.

The truth is that zombies appeal to horror neophytes of all types, unburdened by age, creed, or social strata, and in recognizing this, we as true horror fans need to get over our religious worshiping of these tired-ass fuckers. We are deluged with representations of them, as more and more they become the prerogative of that asshole you absolutely cannot stand. They are a cultural prop, as toothless, inoffensive, middle-American as they come. You can buy zombie shit at WALMART. Say what you will about how vampires are suffering the cultural gentrification and are being ripped out of the hands of the faithful: I would rather see a million sparkly vamps fondling each other, lips quivering and breasts heaving, than overhear one more dickhead talk about how machetes are a better defense against the undead than a shotgun. “Machetes don’t need to be re-loaded.” What a waste of fucking air.

To reiterate: zombies are some tired-ass bullshit. Zombies are for douchebags. Thank you.

Also, “Dawn of the Dead” is too fucking long. Said it.

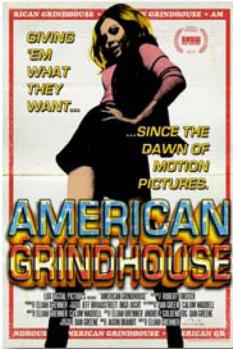


# FILM REVIEWS



## AMERICAN GRINDHOUSE

Dir. Elijah Drenner (2010)



*American Grindhouse* is the sister movie to *Not Quite Hollywood*. Made in the same vein it explores exploitation movies in America as opposed to just focusing on Ozploitation.

Same action pack animated beginning and even general format of interviewing modern day directors about the movies they loved as a kid. Only *American Grindhouse* didn't have Tarantino in it (which I thought was odd) and *Not Quite Hollywood* was practically all Tarantino.

The documentary starts at the very beginning and explains how the very first movies were really exploitation movies. Seems like as soon as man had a movie camera he was trying to get girls to undress in front of it. The majority of the movie focuses on the early year and how movies made outside of Hollywood fought their way into movie houses. It then goes in a basic timeline of progression on how each of the grindhouse subgenres was made.

I am glad that it touches on almost all of the different grindhouse subgenres, but it begins to feel like we get stuck in the 60s for most of the movie. Sure, it's correct that most of these genres started in the 60s, but I thought that Grindhouse really started becoming Grindhouse-ish in the 70s & 80s. The movie is well paced, but I was beginning to freak out when I realized it had been over an hour and they still haven't touched on Naziploitation or Blackploitation movies of the 70s! Eventually, both these genres were covered but very briefly before they started to wrap up the film.

One cool thing they did with the directors they interviewed is that each time they appeared they changed what their subtitle

was. For example John Landis started as "Director of 'American Werewolf in London'" but each time they went back to him they used a different movie, showing his original Grindhouse beginnings. It was neat watching them show these modern day, accepted directors be credited for movies that Hollywood tried to ignore.

*American Grindhouse* was a fun retrospective of a great part of American cinema history. My one irk about it was that it didn't focus on how Grindhouse moved past the theaters and into homes thanks to VCRs and now DVD players. Instead they skip over the 80s and 90s opting to have the directors explain how modern major movies are Hollywood versions of Grindhouse styles. While it was nice to think of *The Passion of the Christ* as an old school religious exploitation piece or *American Gangster* as a modern day Blackploitation movie, I was hoping to see them show that there are people keeping the Grindhouse tradition alive via straight to DVD or small indie films.

## RED, WHITE & BLUE

Dir. Simon Rumley (2010)



*Red, White & Blue* won the "Best of the Fest" award from the Boston Underground Film Festival this year. After seeing some of the other movies that won awards I didn't think much.

Even when the movie was introduced prefaced with "I don't think it's possible to enjoy this movie - as much as it is to be affected by it," I didn't think it would be able to live up to the hype.

I was wrong. It fully deserved the best of the fest, and made me feel like there's hope for indie movies again. Yes, most indie movies don't have a big budget, but that hardly excuses bad pacing, writing, acting or directing. *Red, White & Blue* showed that you don't need money to

make a good movie. The writing felt real, the acting felt natural, the pacing kept you interested. It was exactly what you want from an indie movie.

The story is about three people Erica, Nate and Franki. Erica is a loner that sleeps with anyone, but never the same guy twice and never stays over. Nate is an Army vet that lives at the same co-op as Erica and has a crush on her. Franki is in a rock band where things seem to be working out for him.

The film first focuses on Erica. It shows her daily struggles, her sleeping with guys, her getting a job, and her sleeping with her bosses. Nate shows up bit by bit as the creepy guy that lives down the hall from her who also happens to work with her. Slowly and eventually Erica and Nate become close friends when both start to open up to each other.

The movie then shifts over to Franki's life. It's a hard life but he actually seems to have it quite together. His mother has cancer, but thanks to Franki's blood transfusions she's overcoming it. His girlfriend has been cheating on him while he was away, but wants to come back to him. To top it all off, his band just agreed to go to Europe on a major tour. Things are looking good. Until one bad day, with some serious news, which starts a chain reaction of events that ruins his life. I'd love to tell you the news, but I don't want to ruin the surprise. And what does this have to do with Erica and Nate? Sorry I can't tell you that either, but let's just say things get very screwed up very fast.

As the credits rolled by, the audience I watched it with all stayed in their seats. Some with looks of horror on their faces others just blank stares unable to figure how to go on. There's no music with the credits, just the flickering sound on logs crackling on a fire in the desert. I stayed in the theater til the last credit rolled reflecting back on what I'd seen. Then I remembered it was time to go home, and I got up and left. I was the first person to leave the theater. The audience was still in their seats thinking and trying to find their happy place, so they too could leave. Yeah, it was that intense of a movie.

*Reviews by:*

**Chris "The Reverend" Fitzpatrick**



This summer, director Steve Balderson and his cast of inmates have left the cell block and made the festival rounds for Balderson's feature, **STUCK!** The film noir homage to women-in-prison exploitation varies between strict authenticity and a love song to the genre. With beautiful black and white cinematography and a kicking jazz score that recently won Best Original Score at NYC's Visionfest, there's lots to get excited about with **STUCK!** before even getting to the cast.

Starring Karen Black, Susan Traylor, Mink Stole, Jane Wiedlin, Starina Johnson, and Pleasant Gehman, meet the women of **STUCK!** - slated for probation and DVD release in late 2010.

*Photos by Maryann Bates, courtesy of DIKENGA.com*



SCARS



Photo: Maryann Bates

# AN ALLIGATOR IN ONE CORNER A PRESS TABLE IN THE OTHER.

## THE WEIRD, UNTOLD TALES OF FRED OLEN RAY'S WRESTLING CAREER

by Jonathan Plombon



**W**ith its paradoxical blending of pre-determined finishes and legitimate violence, professional wrestling balances on a thin tightrope between reality and a smoke-and-mirrors exhibition akin to the melodrama of a carefully thought-out film. With hands twirling puppet strings, the heads of the wrestling circuits, known as promoters, direct shows in which athletes act in fifteen-minute scenes performed with dropkicks and head butts.

In the 1990s, that creative connection between film and wrestling became far more obvious when Fred Olen Ray, the low-budget father of flicks like *Evil Toons* and *Beverly Hills Vamp*, crawled through the ropes to adopt the moonlighting persona of promoter and wrestler, "Fabulous" Freddie Valentine.

likely spectacle of the working-class crowds left just as large of an impression on him.

"I noticed when I was a kid that people who looked like they couldn't afford it were always sitting in the front row and that was how important it was for them," he remembers. "I mean, they'd spend money they didn't have or shouldn't be spending so they could have that front-row seat."

Those sights of average folks bug-eyed and hollering out of their seats would later become a muse, but at the time, the youngster dreamt of leaving the audience behind to break rules with as much frequency as he would break bones. Even at that age, Ray sought out the training required to prepare him for headlocks and eye-gouging havoc.

**"I noticed when I was a kid that people who looked like they couldn't afford it were always sitting in the front row and that was how important it was for them."**

Awaiting him would be rattlesnakes, barb-wire, and sheered flesh, but before that, there was the child whose imagination never let adulthood push him into mundane, nine-to-five normalcy.

"I've kind of prided myself on being able to make what I want to happen happen in my life," Ray told SCARS in an exclusive interview.

While memories of the flamboyant '60s star Sputnik Monroe hip-tossed about in Ray's adolescent subconscious, a more distinct wrestling influence arrived during his teenage years in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. It was then that Ray, along with his brother, followed the televised Championship Wrestling from Florida and rushed to live events on Thursdays at the local National Guard Armory.

The then-amateur eye of a burgeoning storyteller noticed details of the larger-than-life world. Even with Buddy Colt peppering the sugar-coated good guys with behind-the-referee chokes and Dusty Rhodes wielding a bull rope like a third arm, Ray found that the other, more un-

"My brother and I looked into [attending a wrestling school] when we were teenagers in Florida, because you could train there in Tampa," he recalls. "This is very early, we're talking the 1970s and it wasn't like it is today. You had to be a pretty huge guy... and neither my brother nor I were huge."

Turnbuckle aspirations took a backseat in the 1980s, when his slew of genre films such as *Alien Dead*, *Scalps*, and *Commando Squad* made him one of the leading exploitation auteurs of the past thirty years.

However, in the mid 1990s, Ray quietly took a break from filming disrespected Native American burial grounds to shoot an hour-long documentary called *Southern Discomfort: Wrestling on the Indie Circuit*.

It was an escape from producing films devised solely to turn a profit.

"We did it for no money. We did it on the fly there," he confesses. "That really wasn't trying to be a documentary on pro

wrestling as much as it was trying to be a view of one night in a small town where a wrestling show comes to town.”

Much like modern professional wrestling’s roots of the strong men issuing challenges to unsuspecting marks, Ray’s involvement in the show came courtesy of the big-boasting, popcorn-littered carnivals. An aficionado of grotesque midway attractions, the director headed back down to Tampa, Florida, on the suggestion of retired Blood Feast producer, David F. Friedman, to purchase a sideshow of his own at a carnival gathering known as The Extravaganza.

Friedman, who then ran the carnival in Anniston, Alabama, arrived at the event with his business partner, Rick Montana. A musician, local spokesman, and part-time wrestler, Montana had amassed a reputation in the Southern town as a knowledgeable hand in rasslin’ by being both an active competitor and a promoter.

They struck a deal. Montana would help set up the show for Ray’s documentary if Ray would put Montana in a few films, which eventually included Active Stealth and Fugitive Rage.

Southern Discomfort chronicles a wrestling event run by Friedman and Montana, its colorful assortment of well-known personalities including “Bullet” Bob Armstrong and The Iron Sheik, and those local characters like Frank Barnhill, a middle-aged, hand-shaking, old-lady-smooching manager of a Jack’s restaurant who, on the weekend, dons a yellow mask to become The Flame: a sniveling fire-throwing heel. Those crowds, the ones with tank tops and cut-offs that Ray watched with amazement some twenty years before, are also prominently featured.

Made in the time-constraints of a day and filmed mostly in a blistering 105 degree high-school gymnasium, Southern Discomfort also briefly documents Ray’s early transformation into his alter-ego, “Fabulous” Freddie Valentine. He manages The Flame, handing over a combustible powder to his client behind the referee’s back, which backfires when Bob Armstrong strikes early, setting the sky ablaze and not his face.

“I was very particular about how I’d let [Southern Discomfort] out and who’d handle it. I didn’t rush through it, because I didn’t do it for the money. I just wanted to do it,” Ray says, recalling that the film took several years to be released. “I was very pleased with the way it turned out. And the LA Weekly, which is a pretty substantial, cultural paper here, picked it as their Video of the Week.”



S

Peter Maivia Jr.

It would be far from Ray’s only contribution to the sport.

In 1999, his two passions intersected again when Ray began casting for The Capital Conspiracy. With the script requiring a role for a grappler, Ray rang up Ric Drasin, a wrestler, bodybuilder, actor, and the former training partner of Arnold Schwarzenegger.

“Fred had called me in on a movie to play a wrestler on a plane and we started talking. I didn’t realize that he was a big wrestling fan,” Drasin explains. “And the

more we talked the more we became friends and he gave me the role right off the bat.”

Drasin’s casting in The Capital Conspiracy wasn’t the only impetus for his future squared-circle run. While filming its climactic fight sequence on the top of a train, the hands-on director tore his shoulder cup. Ray, who had been an avid boxer, had to contemplate leaving the sport.

“I was telling Ric about the problem with my shoulder and that I wasn’t going to box anymore,” Ray remembers. “And Ric said that I should give wrestling a try if I wasn’t ready to get out of the ring yet [laughs].”

“He said that he’d like to do shows and that he was interested in training for wrestling,” Drasin says. “I said, ‘Come over and I’ll work with you.’”

With an actual in-ring career of drilling fists and blackening bruises in opponents dating back to 1965, Drasin continues his physically demanding career by teaching new generations of students the fundamentals in his American Wrestling Federation Pro Wrestling School based out of Sherman Oaks, California. His web site, ricdrasin.com, is an end-all for fans with its detailed history, articles, photos, and information on joining his class. His interview show, seen at ricscorner.com, has entertained over a million viewers. With a wealth of knowledge that has attracted celebrities such as Access Hollywood’s Maria Menounous to his academy, Drasin agreed to instruct Ray when the director let the details of his secret desire slip.

Depending on whom you talk to, Ray’s leap to the ring was rife with struggle or just momentary blips.

“I wanted him to get in shape. I got him in the gym and started working him, and I worked him kind of hard,” Drasin explains. “He thought I was mad at him because I worked him so hard, but that’s how I train. It was kind of hard for him to transition on a diet, because he wasn’t used to it.”

With a hearty chuckle, Ray debates Drasin’s recollection.

“Well, that’s his opinion,” Ray laughs.

"Ric was like a walking action figure. Did I ever look like a walking action figure? No. But if you ever see on my web site, the Freddie Valentine web site, I was in pretty good shape in some of those photos."

With Drasin developing Ray's conditioning and later Mando Guerrero, brother of the late WWE Champion Eddie Guerrero, instilling rigorous discipline, Ray hit the mat. Although he had experience dishing out pain with zombies and extraterrestrials via the comfort of a camera lens, the filmmaker found that being in the ring could bring a much intimate terror.

"I put him on a show that I ran, one of my first shows in the junior high school, and he broke his ankle," Drasin recalls.

Ray adds, "It was a compound fracture, it was like a Joe Theismann break. It required a double surgery and plates and pins and screws. It was unpleasant; I can't watch the video tape. It's that unnerving to see it."

Yet that inner teenager who was considered too small to be a wrestler would not submit the possibility.

"To let something like that put me out, it's not something that would be acceptable," he says.

Neither would a lack of employment opportunities. Ray, who had once left a job at a television station to make movies in Hollywood after he was refused a raise, didn't wait for another opportunity. He made one.

"I think the problem in California, and anywhere else, is that there are so few promotions that have so few audiences and there are so many guys that want to work," Ray argues. "I think I had wrestled my son one night, who had wrestled in Puerto Rico for several years. I wrestled him in front of a crowd where, I swear to God, the guys in the dressing room almost out-

numbered the guys in the audience. That wasn't something I really was interested in."

And Fred Olen Ray's All-Star Championship Wrestling, emanating from the American Legion Hall in Reseda, California, was born.

"I wanted to wrestle the kind of matches I wanted to do and wrestle the people I wanted to do. And I thought I could put people in seats," Ray states. "And we did."



While most promoters, such as Drasin, use their events to showcase their students or bring in a big name every month to lure in fans, Ray opted to bring a bit of both his and wrestling's past to his events. He incorporated carnival-like main events to his events, layering the ropes with barb-wire and pyrotechnics.

"[Those matches were] where Freddie got to live his dream and act like a nut," Kevin Salisbury, a wrestler who worked for ACW as "Chip Adams," reminisces. "I remember the match he had with a fairly sedated alligator in the ring. Just seeing that was great as well as his electric fence match. Freddie had balls."

"There were other small promotions around and I just wanted something that would make us stand out," Ray says. "It was kind of like low-budget filmmaking,

exploitation moviemaking, I was trying to come up with a great title that would be on the poster that would make people show up to see what was going to happen."

What his movies Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers and Attack of the 60 Foot Centerfold were to film, his Japanese Suicide Match, the Texas Rattlesnake Match, the Alligator Death Match were to wrestling.

"The biggest problems I always had was always finding other guys to actually do the matches with me even if they didn't have to do the dirty work," Ray says. "Finding guys who would actually just be in the ring with a gator who didn't have its mouth taped shut."

One of those guys ended up being Peter Maivia, Jr., the son of legendary WWE Hall of Famer, "High Chief" Peter Maivia. Even up to the starting bell, the former Pacific Heavyweight Champion had second thoughts about participating in a match with an alligator.

"One thing that stood out was that prior to the match, I had to sit in the room with this Hannibal Lecter cage [that contained the alligator] but bigger, a nine-foot steel box with a small barred window in the front for at least four hours," Maivia remembers. "It sounded pissed and at that time I just wanted to call this whole thing off."

Unlike a traditional bout, Maivia found that his experience didn't lend itself well to wild animals.

"I don't know how I would have trained for something like that other than just trying to understand the alligator's behavior. My dad was a Samoan High Chief so probably wrestling an alligator was a daily routine for him," Maivia says. "The only thing that got me through it was a lot of prayers."

Ray had his own concerns.

"I remember I told the [alligator's handlers] that it might be a bloody match and I was asking them what would happen if you went over there with blood on you, if the alligator would think it'd be a piece of chicken," Ray recalls. "And they said, well, she never bothered anyone before and I went, 'Well, that's great.'"

In ACW's version of the Alligator Death Match, Ray and Maivia vied to yank the 180-pound creature, which was positioned in the corner, to the middle of the ring where the combatants would remove the World belt from around the reptile's waist.

Ray reclaimed the belt when his arch-nemesis, Crayz, who would reappear often to cause chaos for Ray, interfered by slamming a trash can into Maivia's head.

"{The alligator's handlers] said that you can use a rolled-up magazine or stick to push its chin up before you grab him," Ray says. "And I said, 'No, that's not going to work, nobody's going to go for that, I need to grab him by my hands directly.'

"I had him with two hands... I had to let go with one hand to get this belt off of him, and that meant holding him with another hand. I didn't have the body secured, but it wasn't a problem, I thought it might be, but after I had him, he didn't move."

It turns out that Ray, and especially his wife Kimberly A. Ray, should have been more anxious about the furniture than the wild animal. Kimberly Ray, who usually pranced around the outside and handed her man a foreign object, consented to become part of the match.

"We were going to have a table propped up in a corner, and Peter Maivia was going to come charging across there toward her and she was going to turn and see him and I was going to cover her," Ray says. "He

was going to hit both of us and go through the table set up in a 45 degree angle in the corner.

"I remember Peter set the table straight upright, he didn't lean it, and it wasn't going to break, and he plowed into my wife and we went into that table. It did not break. I don't think she ever forgave me. "

The audience's thrill in watching such a show, Ray explains, is as much about embedding fear in the participants as it is embedding fear in the audience itself. While the fans thirst to see the wrestlers in real danger, they also desire for it to extend to them. Much like a horror film, the fear

ous, they're the opposition that the crowd can't predict.

Thus, when the demented grappler clad in a Cannibal Corpse t-shirt known as Crayz beat Ray for the ACW World Championship in a Japanese Suicide Match, Ray booked a Texas Rattlesnake Match for the return bout.

The spectacle began even before Ray and Crayz delivered their initial blows. A rattlesnake wrangler by the name of Jewels hauled a box into the ring like a geek in front of a tent, informing the crowd that these creatures inside were "quite capable of killing you dead" and that "this is very serious." Using sticks, he pulled them out to the audience's instant verbal pandemonium of shrieks and yelps.

Simply rendering your opponent unconscious would only partially complete its objective. One would have to reach a key hanging from the ceiling, use it to open a cage of rattlesnakes, and remove the belt which had been placed inside.

But when Crayz retrieved the key by climbing a ladder, Ray incapacitated his foe by lunging into him and sending the

unorthodox gladiator careening into the table.

"I would have never climbed that ladder, knocked over that rope and gone through the table. I've gone through a table, but I wouldn't do off the top of a ladder. I just wouldn't do it," Ray says. "But I'd put my hand in a cage of rattlesnakes."

Although Ray could dig deep into the cage of slithering sin, he quickly noticed that he could only make out the head of one of the snakes. The other Eastern Diamondback was hiding under the belt, poised to strike.

"I had seen the stick that the guy had used and I was trying to push the snake aside so



needs to stretch past the screen where the audience can worry about their own safety.

"Most people aren't that close to an alligator anyway and now there's an alligator that's loose," Ray explains. "I mean they had a wire around the waist so if it got out of the ring, they could stop it from getting in the audience. But there isn't anything else stopping it from getting in the audience [laughs]."

Reptiles in Ray's films have often been adopted as antagonists. Cold-blooded and quick to attack, they're the animalistic personification of murderous intent. Whether it's the fiend in Biohazard or the scaled abnormalities in Silent Venom and Ven-

I could reach in and the kids started boozing. I thought this is not going to work," Ray remembers.

In order to distract the reptile, he snapped his fingers. It worked... for one.

"I grabbed the belt really fast and pulled it out, and just as I did, the snake that was underneath took a snap at me," he recalls. "And you can see it in the video, it lunges up and tries to get me but it didn't."

It's a terrifying scene that Ray made available on Wrestling's Wildest Matches, a DVD collection of some of ACW's out-of-control gimmicks like the exploding tables and electric fence bouts.

Although Ray overcame those diabolical monstrosities of nature who instinctively slaughter or poison whatever meat, whether it is man, woman, or child, it can find nearby, it still paled in comparison to the battle between himself and the legendary Madman from Sudan: Abdullah the Butcher.

"[That match was] one of those weird things where you talk about what you're going to do, and then after the first five seconds, that's all out the window," Ray says. "You don't know what's going to happen next."

The 450-pound Abdullah the Butcher has littered his legacy with stabbing forks in Carlos Colon and matching Bruiser Brody cartilage slice for cartilage slice in crowd-displacing brawls. His history of opponents carving out his skull during his squared-circle gore fests have resulted in forehead divots dug so deep that quarters can fit in them.

When Ray and Abdullah locked up for an ACW show, the two combatants fought beyond the parameters of a building lit by neon beer signs. It ventured out of the ring, into the parking lot, and onto the hoods of cars. The unwritten rule of protecting opponents from injury was not abided by Abdullah, who sneak attacked

Ray without warning.

"I mean he did really hit me in the back of the head with that metal belt as hard as he could," Ray remembers.

Prior to the match, Abdullah and Ray agreed for their untamed clash to conclude when wrestlers from the dressing room would break the two apart. That's what they agreed upon.

Nonetheless, this is what happened.

"At one point all the guys came out to pull us apart and Abdullah keeps telling me, 'You double-crossed me,'" Ray remembers. "I have no idea what he's talking about. He kept saying, 'You double-



crossed me, you double-crossed me.'"

As Abdullah fought off the boys, launching them sideways and channeling his attention on Ray, those who were supposed to pry the two apart gave up. Salisbury, who worked that night, even refused to run out when he saw Abdullah carving a warpath with silverware and lacerations.

"I decided not to run out because Abbie was literally gouging the workers with his fork. My friend Jason Allgood actually got cut on his forehead by his fork," Salisbury recalls. "The Butcher acted nuts in the ring and made it seem like he was genuinely pissed off at the run in."

The Madman from Sudan lunged at Ray,

unable to be restrained by physical force.

"I don't even remember exactly how it ended. He just wouldn't go along with the program," Ray says. "It was the longest twenty minutes of my life."

Then, just when one would think that Abdullah couldn't become more unpredictable, he went to another extreme.

"Later on, it was like nothing had ever happened. He was a very sophisticated guy when he wasn't Abdullah the Butcher. He was immaculately dressed; he smoked a cigar; and he sat there with a glass of red wine in the dressing room," Ray remembers. "He would come over to my house, and he loved my kitchen, he was into kitchens, he wanted to take photos of my kitchen to show his wife when he got home. I said, 'Shoot whatever you want, dude.'"

Wrestling, however, requires more than just hurling bodies. Astute professionals practice psychology or storytelling in matches. It's not so much what the athletes do in the ring, but when they do it that spurs the largest ovation of the crowd. There needs to be ups and downs, the good guy in peril, and the bad guy constantly derailing his opponent's momentum. Like any good film, the audiences need to care about the characters before they care about what those characters are doing.

"Honestly, storytelling is a lost art that died in the '80s," Salisbury states. "The goal of the performers was to get the fans to either boo you or cheer for you, and make them care that you are getting your ass handed to you and give you the will to make your big comeback."

Storytelling can be executed in various ways. Ray, who has learned to succeed while working outside of the system and without infinite budgets, took to storytelling in much the same way: disguising the negatives and accentuating his gift for tall tales.

"He was limited in some of the stuff he

was going to do as far as some of the stuff off the ropes, but he has a knack for telling a story, because he directs... and he knows that wrestling is a storyline," Drasin says.

However, Ray, being a screenwriter, took a slightly different storytelling technique than those who improvise in the ring by calling out proceeding moves per the audience's reaction. Meticulous with planning shots and following structure in his scripts, Ray applied that same idea to his matches

"He's a director, he likes to pattern out every step. Everything has to be like the way he wants it to and he can't deviate from that," Drasin remembers. "And I said, 'I don't know if that's a good idea because what if you forget halfway in where you are? You'll lose your whole thing, your script. But he'd work it out, from start to finish, so it'd be exactly like he wanted."

"I always wanted to know what my story was going in," Ray points out. "And I wanted to know that I had an outcome that I was trying to get going, because I was planning another match a month from now, that would pay off from this match."

Ray's approach also had to do with the quality of opponents.

"A big problem for me is meeting green kids who didn't have a lot of experience. And they'd go for something or call for something in the ring that they couldn't pull off and someone gets hurt," he reasons. "And I didn't want it to be me."

"You get down to it and you see if they can work, they can't; they like the idea of being out there more than actually being out there. And when you get out there, these guys think it's so fake that you're never going to get hit in the face. Oh, please. That it's not going to hurt? You're still falling down from four, five, six feet in the air, what are you going to think?"

As Ray once discovered when tagging with Aaron Baker and former American Gladiator Gary Kasper, it's best to know the caliber of a fellow wrestler prior to the match.

"[Aaron Baker and I] went over to Gary Kasper to tag him and he wouldn't get in the ring. We're like going Gary, come on.

And Gary wouldn't climb through the ropes. And we're like going, dude what's going on? He kept saying, 'I... I don't know how to wrestle.' And we're like, oh fuck," Ray says. "The guy would not step through the ropes, he was scared. And I'm like this is unreal. I had to carry the whole match. Never got any help from this guy. None at all. None at all."

Ray argues that while it's the extreme matches that pique people's interest, it's the narrative that keeps them compelled — sometimes too well, as was the case with a show for another promoter in Alabama. In the South, wrestling differs from that in glitzy California. The crowds honestly care about winners and losers, instead of stunts. It's where the villainous rule-breaker like Ray can incite a riot just by pinning the beloved Bob Armstrong.

"I sprayed [Bob Armstrong] in the eyes with hair spray, because my earlier persona was that I had perfect hair. And if you muffed my hair, I'd have to stop and have it combed. I sprayed him in the eyes with hair spray and then hit him with the can. And put him down," Ray recalls. "And Bob never loses a match. But he agreed to put me over. And it was like a big fairgrounds and it just went crazy."

"We had to have security guards walk us to our car at the end of the night, because [the fans] were waiting for us. They were very serious; some kid hit me right in the face [laughs]. That's the kind of reaction you want — if you can get out with your skin still attached. That's the kind of crowd you want. They bought into everything you did."

However, all the talent, creativity and rattlesnakes don't necessarily make a profit. Even a full American Legion Hall doesn't guarantee financial success after paying for the ring, the hall, and the TV advertisements. While Abdullah the Butcher couldn't keep Ray down for the count, the rising costs did.

"There wasn't any money to be made and if you were lucky when you counted up your receipts for the night, you'd cover the cost of the show," Ray notes. "I just kind of went, 'Ah, the hell with it.'"

"He always ended up spending more money than he made. But that's the nature



of indie shows. Sometimes it just works out that way," Drasin comments.

Yet even with the monetary issue, Ray never used it as an excuse to screw over the wrestlers.

"I once did a show in Yuma, Arizona, and was promised a \$150 payday. Had a room, did an interview on TV for publicity, [and the] show didn't draw [so] the promoter stiffed us," Salisbury describes. "Freddie already had an envelope with your name on it and would pay you regardless of how he drew which showed that he had more character than 99% of his fellow promoters."

And although Ray's ACW ended like most every other promotion did, his lasting impression in the sport is far more atypical. Ray, unlike Salisbury's former boss, was a reputable promoter.

"Looking back on things now, I could have worked for Freddie forever," Salisbury says. "You couldn't help but want this guy to succeed. There are few promotions around with that feel to it and very few men involved who were honest."

Perhaps it's because that boy who watched Buddy Colt is the same man who booked the Texas Rattlesnake Match.

"You know what? I wouldn't undo it," Ray responds when asked about his final reflections. "Other than not breaking my legs and tearing my biceps out [laughs], I'd probably do everything about the same."

Ray's that one member of the working-class audience who can now not only afford to be in the front row, but be the show itself. Injuries and financial stress aside, Ray's aspiration to be a pro wrestler can never be considered a dream. He was awake the entire time.

**"So many people do drudgery jobs and they do it Monday through Friday and all they hope for is that they can be off Saturday and Sunday and maybe get a week vacation during the year,"** Ray discloses. **"You know, I get up every day and go and do exactly what I want to do."**

# THINGS TO COME



The Grindhouse trailer come alive. The incomparable Robert Rodriguez pairs Danny Trejo up with a crazed cast of Cheech Marin, Robert DeNiro, Steven Seagal, Jessica Alba, Michelle Rodriguez, Jeff Fahey... and Lindsey Lohan. Near impossible to have anything other than the highest of expectations, this one somehow gets cooler with every bit of info, promo images or trailer released.

September 3, theaters.



## PIRANHA 3-D

Alexandre ‘Splat Pack’ Aja is sure to make a bloodier movie than Joe Dante’s 1978 original – but will he deliver on the mayhem Dante makes so fun to watch? With totally outlandish looking killer fish, and casting that includes both Richard Freyfuss and Christopher Lloyd, this might end up being the best thing to happen all summer. **August 20, theaters.**

## CENTURION

Okay, we all agree director/writer Neil Marshall was awesome with *The Descent* – but for fans of Marshall’s balls-to-the-wall, action-styled pastiches, Marshall’s latest film, *Centurion*, harkens back to the days of *Dog Soldiers* more than anything else. With thankfully scarce CGI, *Centurion* takes place in 117 A.D., telling the story of invading Romans feuding with a tribe of resisters during Rome’s occupation in Britain. **August 27, theaters.**



## ALL ABOUT EVIL

From the bowels of San Fran’s best, midnight movie hostess Peaches Christ brings her ample talents to the big screen. Feauting indie’s “it” guy Noah Segan (*Deadgirl*), and cult icons Cassandra “Elvira” Peterson and Mink Stole, director Josh Grannell (the Clark Kent to Peaches Christ’s Superman) hits his target audience of camp-loving horror fans square on. All About Evil stars Natasha Lyonne as a meek librarian turned snuff-making theater owner. Catch this during Peaches’ live tour of the film, if you can. **Summer-Fall, limited.**

# THE SOUND OF MUSIC

REVIEWS BY Alex DiVincenzo



## Walter Sickert & The Army of Broken Toys - 28 Seeds: The Last Radio Show

Self-Released 3.5/5 flies

What happens when you give a band of talented and unique musicians a mere month to write and record an entire album? Walter Sickert & The Army of Broken Toys answer that question with 28 Seeds: The Last Radio Show. The Boston-based group's response to the RPM Challenge, an annual event for bands to record an album's worth of material in the month of February, is an eclectic concept album about Earth's final years of existence. An intertwining combination of music and spoken word (including pseudo-advertisements/propaganda) make up the hour-long duration. While the concept is an interesting one, the spoken tracks deprecate the album's replay value. The music tracks (less than half of the 35 total), however, are great. The lack of a recording budget is apparent, but the low-fi quality is fitting for the indie, avant garde sound. Sickert's beautifully haunting vocals are accompanied by a wide array of instruments, including but not limited to piano, accordion, violin, ukulele, and xylophone. If this artistic undertaking only took them a month to create, image what The Broken Toys' next proper release will have to offer.

For fans of: Velvet Underground, Bauhaus, The Dresden Dolls

## Vampires Everywhere! - Lost in the Shadows Century Media Records

1/5 flies

Despite taking their name from "The Lost Boys," Vampires Everywhere! have more in common with "Twilight." Much like how the film is an insult to real monster movies, the California sextet is a poor excuse for post-hardcore music. For reasons I'll never understand, respected metal label Century Media signed these self-described outcasts. Lost in the Shadows, the group's debut EP, features their first two songs. Vocalist Michael Vampire (the other members go by equally laughable monikers) used to sing for the pop punk band Love, She Wrote. Now that the genre is no longer marketable, he has hopped on the latest trend. His new vocal style includes screams and cheesy, auto-tuned vocals. The worst thing about Vampires Everywhere! is not the the music itself or even that they seem to put more effort into putting on their make-up than making music, but rather the fact that the gimmick will undoubtedly sell. If this junk is passable as music these days, the world is in dire need of a Van Helsing to exterminate these Edward Cullen wannabes.



For fans of: Attack Attack!, Escape the Fate, Alesana

## 5 Albums We Want Now

August 17: Iron Maiden - The Final Frontier



August 24: The Sword - Warp Riders



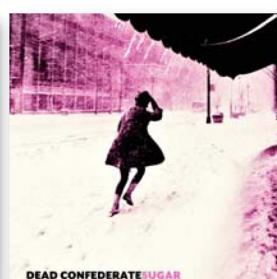
August 24: Apocalyptica - 7th Symphony



August 24: Dead Confederate - Sugar



September 14: Grinderman - Grinderman 2



**Jason  
CRAIG**

**Russell  
JACKSON**

**Jayme Roxann  
WRIGHT**

**Chris  
BECKETT**

In the Final Battle between Heaven and Hell  
Our Salvation will Rest in the Hands of the Most  
Notorious Serial Killer of our time, Justin Waise

**Evil Has Many Ways**

e v i l  
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